

THE
Suppression of Popery
Recommended
To Her Majesty.

Madam,

A I have always from my Youth had a great Affection for all Persons, whom I apprehended to be sincerely virtuous and pious, tho never so mean in the Eyes of the World; so I cannot but have a great Concern for your Majesty, whom my Great Lord and Master has plac'd in a Place of so Great Trust amongst us Mortals, nothing doubting of your Sincere Piety and Devotion. For as the Powers that be, are ordain'd by Him, and it is He, the most High who removeth Kings and setteth up Kings, and ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whom he will, so I must acknowledge his powerful Hand in it, tho it be not in the Ordinary Course. But that requires the greater Care and Circumspection in you to answer his Righteous Designs, and Correspond to the Order of his Providence: And that is a matter, wherein you are like to meet with the most subtle and most dangerous Enemies. For here has long since been such a Trade of Tricking observ'd, both in the Court and in the Parliament, and so little Regard had to the overruling Providential Government of Human Affairs, even by those, whose special Business it is to be Monitors of it, that the great Business of the Government seems to have been acted more by the Wisdom of the World, than with any regard to the true Principles of Divine Wisdom.

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How much your immediate Predecessor deceiv'd himself by this, or was deceiv'd by others, and even by the dilatory Counsels of false Propbets, tho not yet commonly understood, possibly Time may shew. I had a great concern for him upon that Consideration: And I never fail'd, either publicly or privately, to give him Notice of what I thought did much concern either himself or the Nation. But I had then a secret Conveyance to him, by the hand even of the Queen her self, while she liv'd, for matters proper only for that way. I desire to perform the same Fidelity to your Majesty. And tho I have no such advantage of a secret Conveyance, the Occasion of my writing at present needs it not, being matter not only of publick concern, but what may be related in such a publick manner by the Press; and indeed ought to be, that the Parliament may be sensible either of the Defect of an Act of Parliament, made with much Zeal and Concern four or five years since, for the further Preventing the Growth of Popery, or of the Neglect of the Execution, which it was made purposely to correct. For there is certainly some Mystery in the matter, such as it is said to be the Honour of Kings to search out, Prov. 25. 3. that no Effect answerable to the Zeal and Concern with which it was made, hath yet been produced, but rather the contrary.

But before I say more of that, I must take notice of another Mystery, which may be of great Concern to your Majesty and these Kingdoms too, to be well consider'd. It has been believ'd and observ'd by wise Men in all Ages and Nations, and of all Religions, Gentiles, Jews, Christians and Mahometans, that some special Blessings, and Curses and Imprecations of Parents, have had very notable Effects upon their Posterity. And there are two very remarkable Imprecations of King James I. related by several Authors, which are not unlikely to have been a Root of what I call the Fate of the Family. The one upon such of his Family as should embrace or favour Popery; the other upon the Judges and their Posterity, and upon himself and his Posterity, if they or he should spare the Criminals in the Case of Sir Thomas Overbury. But in that Case the Judges did their part, but he did the contrary. The former was only conditional upon the Acts of his Posterity; but the latter was conditional only upon his own Act, but otherwise absolute upon them. I have in my own time observ'd several Families, which have continu'd long under such a Fate, and been extirpated at last, which I often thought might have been extricated and preserv'd, if the Root of it had been well inquir'd into, and proper Means us'd to remove the Cause. And I hope there may be such Means us'd as may extricate and secure your Majesty out of that unhappy Fate, which hath hitherto been so remarkable in your Royal Family. But it is more than the Pope himself

himself and all his Missioners, with all their Absolutions can ever do, or can ever be done at all, if you should by your own Act involve your self in the Imprecation, and after such manifest Indications of Divine Indignation against Popery in this Nation.

And I must confess in the Words of St. Paul, that I am jealous for you with a Godly Jealousy, fearing lest by any means as the Serpent beguiled Eve thro his Subtilty, so some of his Ministers or Agents, should beguile you into the Snare, and others too by that means, into Sin against God and their own Souls, tho not into Popery it self, by the deceitful Wisdom of the World and Superficial Pretences.

Upon Thursday last in the Evening three Persons were brought to the Bar of the Court of Sessions at the Old Baily, being indicted for Popish Priests, and the Counsel for your Majesty mov'd the Court that the Tryal might be put off till the next Sessions, but not that they should be bail'd in the mean time, for that as I take it be oppos'd; but it was mov'd by another, and there were some upon the Bench, who seem'd to be for it with some Concern; and bail'd they were at last; but what Bail was taken, I know not. One of these Persons, a poor weak old Man, had honestly confess'd himself a Priest, and thereupon been committed to Newgate. Another was notoriously known to be a Popish Bishop, a special Servant of the Popes, call'd Vicarius Apostolicus, sworn to keep his Secrets, and to persecute and impugne the Hereticks, Schismatics and Rebels to their Lord the Pope and his Successors, pro posse, all he can, that is, Protestants, all of the Greek Communion, and the greatest part of the profess'd Christians in the World; and was reprimanded in open Court for his Bishoping here.

I had before the Court sat presented to the Judges and to several of the Justices a printed Charge of Treason against the Roman Catholick Missioners, by Laws antecedent to any Acts against Priests and Jesuits; and shew'd to some of them a Paper, which I had just then drawn up, of a fair Proposal to the Nobility, &c. of that Communion, hereafter inserted, which I desir'd might be read in open Court; but that was not granted; but when the Prisoners were at the Bar, it was, with the leave of the Recorder, handed from the Bench to Dr. Gifford at the Bar; but more than that was not permitted, tho there was what would have been offer'd against the bailing of some of them at least: But it seem'd a thing resolv'd by some before. And whether there has been any Fault committed in pening the Act, or in the Execution, is a matter very proper both for your Majesty, and for the Parliament to consider.

For it is notoriously known, that the Act was most zealously promoted for a more effectual Restraint of the Growth of Popery, upon great Pro-

ocation and inexcusable Practices, as may be seen in Mr. Kettleby's Account of the seducing of his Daughter, and teaching her to dissemble, equivocate and lie, and even most solemnly renounce Popery, and take the Sacrament upon it; as they have now again lately seduc'd a young Gentlewoman even in the Archbishop's Neighbourhood. And the A C T it self is exprefs, that it was made upon consideration of great resort of Popish Bishops, Priests and Jesuits, and their Affronting the Laws openly and in an insolent manner, and daily Endeavours to pervert his Majesty's natural born Subjects, and this occasion'd by Neglect of the due Execution of the Laws already in force, and for preventing the further Growth of Popery, and of such Treasonable and Execrable Designs against the Government and the Establish'd Religion, and for a further Remedy over and beyond the good Laws already made. So that the Intent of the Act it self is as plain as the Intention of those who so zealously promoted it. And the Question is, Whither it has been so contriv'd by some tricking Politicians, who, like Watermen, looking one way and rowing another, have defeated, not only the Intention of the Promoters, but the Intent of the Act it self, by making the Crime only a Misdemeanor and bailable, which was Treason, and not bailable before; to say nothing of other Inconsistencies in it? or by some Neglect in the Execution?

It has been eluded before, if what is reported be true, that one and the only Person condemned upon it to perpetual Imprisonment, was sent to Jersey, or some other of our Islands, and there suffer'd to escape, if it be so indeed, which the very Place may make suspected; for it must have been for some special Reason. But for the Execution now there are several Persons concerned, and all, or all but one, upon their Oaths: 1. The Person, who took the Examination, and committed or bailed them. 2. The Attorney General. 3. The Solicitor. 4. The Clerk of the Peace for Middlesex. 5. The Middlesex Jury. 6. The Judges and Justices at the Sessions at the Old Baily. And the truth is, there seems to be some Fault in each of the Courts, if the Witnesses were not tampered with. 1. In that the Bill was not sooner found at Hick's Hall, so that the Prisoners were not brought to the Bar at the Old Baily, till the Court was ready to adjourn; and then 2. in that Court, that they did not adjourn for a day or two, if their was occasion. But I think I have open'd enough of that matter, and shall therefore leave it to the Consideration of such as are more concern'd to search deeper into it.

But there is another matter to be well consider'd, which is alledg'd in favour of these Proceedings, but seems to imply some sense of some Fault, which is endeavour'd to be excus'd, and to have been cast out by some tricking

ing Politicians, to abuse inconsiderate People, and stop their Mouths; and it does very well deserve your Majesty's very serious Consideration. And that is a Prudential Pretence of the Regard which we ought to have of our Roman Catholick Confederates. It is, I confess, very agreeable to * the Politicks of the last Reign, to have little regard to Religion, Justice, or the Honor of the Nation, but only to the present Occasion to serve turns. But I hope your Majesty is a Person of a deeper Sense of the Transcendent Majesty of God, and of the strict Account you must e'er long give of these matters at his tremendous Judgment, besides the Consideration of the Honour of your Memory hereafter. For

* What I complain-
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This Pretence is 1. False and Unreasonable. 2. Dishonourable to the Nation. 3. Scandalous to the Confederates. And, 4. Ungrateful and highly Provoking to Almighty God. 1. It is False and Unreasonable to imagine, that they should be much concern'd at our Executing of two or three Priests, if it was to have been so, as it was not, who are no more concern'd at our casting out our King, and all his race of their Religion, for no other Cause than that. 2. It is doubly Dishonourable to the Nation: (1.) Even Ridiculous, that this Nation, by which the Power of our Popish Adversaries hath been so eminently broken heretofore, and again so lately, should be afraid of offending our Popish Confederates, who have been supported and deliver'd by us, by a just Execution of our own Laws upon our own Criminal Subjects, because of their Religion. (2.) That we should discover so little Regard to the Religion we profess, as to prostitute the Preservation of it, for the Preservation of such a Confederacy. (3.) And it is no less scandalous to them, to make them abominate a Religion, they see so little valud by the Professors of it, and so much the more Uncharitable in us, to give them a much greater Offence. And yet this is not all; for it is a plain Self-Condernation of Hypocrisy, for casting out one King, and keeping out another, upon Pretence of Preservation of a Religion, for which it appears by our own shewing, we have no such great Concern. And their Zeal against Hereticks will make it yet so much the more Scandalous and Offensive to them.

But 4. that which is most of all to be well consider'd by all, and by your Majesty more especially, is how Ungrateful and highly Provoking such Politick Consideration is like to be to Almighty God. His Providence is very remarkable; 1. in Preserving this Nation from so many desperate Secret Conspiracies, and so Powerful open Hostilities on behalf of the Papal Faction. And 2. in making this People his principal Instruments of breaking the Powers heretofore of Spain, and now lately of France and of supporting and delivering such of them as have confederated with

with us against their *Adversaries of the same Religion*. And we have lately made a Solemn Thanksgiving to him, for his *Mercy and Favour to us in the late Victory*. It is therefore time for us now to consider the Tendency of this long Scene of Providence, and what it may seem to lead us to, that we may wisely and gratefully apply our selves to a ready Conformity and Correspondence with it, and not be like the Horse and Mule, which have no Understanding. But such Policy as this is a Brutish Policy, nay I will be bold to say a Diabolical Policy, proceeding from the Gates of Hell, the Consultations and Instigations of Infernal Spirits, and promoted by some of their Instruments and Agents; and very Ungrateful and highly Provoking to the Holy Majesty of God. For,

1. It is such a Departure from intire Belief and Trust in God, by recourse to such base and dishonourable means to secure our Confederacy, as is utterly inconsistent with the Sincerity of a Solemn Thanksgiving, and turns it into a Superficial Formality; and may kindle a fire in Jacob, and bring up heavy Displeasure against Israel, if we should proceed in it.

2. It is a brutish Inadvertence and Disregard to the Course, Conduct and Designs of the Providence of God over us, in giving us such Advantage for the Destruction of that monstrous scandalous Imposture of Popery, both at home and amongst our Confederates by a wise Management of the Opportunity: And therefore instead of that to give them such Scandal, is both uncharitable to Men, and ungrateful to God, and cannot but be very provoking to him.

* And no small Fault to be more ready to excuse than to amend.

3. It is a * Great Duty incumbent upon this Nation, ever since the beginning of the Reformation, to consider better of that Work, what false Steps have been made, and what Corruptions introduc'd as well as cast out, and what are the true Roots of all our Divisions and Subdivisions, and Contentions amongst our selves. For it is nothing but the Faults of the Reformation, which keeps up Popery not only in this Nation, but in the World, and is the Occasion of all our Dissentions. And our Neglect of this, at such a time as this, under such Circumstances, is great Stupidity and Ingratitude to God, and a plain Evidence of how little there is of a Genuine Christian Spirit amongst us; for which Multitudes of our Grandees in this World are like to be low enough in another.

Could your immediate Predecessor have been prevail'd with to have had more Regard to these things, he would, I doubt not, have been more successful, and might have been a Glorious Instrument indeed: But alas! by his stooping to the use of such Politicks, as are the only common Policies of this degenerate Age, he really suffer'd that Diminution of his Majesty, which

which is yet little understood, but will be better in time. And one great Occasion of his Miscarriage was, I doubt, by the means of an Elimas he brought over with him; of whom your Majesty, and this Church and Nation have reason to be aware, and to treat him as he deserves, least he do more Mischief. And I shall be ready to do your Majesty and my Country that Service, as to give you a more particular Account of him, when you please.

But to return to our Business at the Sessions, it was no Cause of Blood, nor of any kind of Persecution, nor of any ill will to any of the Prisoners; but of Religion, of Justice, of Charity, and of Service both to God and to my Country, that I appear'd in there; and not to hurt in the least any Soul, but to have improv'd the Occasion for the more notorious Conviction of the Imposture of Popery, and Detection of the Fallacies and Deceits, whereby the Nobility, Gentry and Laity of the Roman Communion, and other Profelytes daily, are most shamefully abus'd. And for that purpose did I draw up that fair Proposal before-mention'd, and desir'd only the Favour to have made it more publick in the Court. But it is time enough the next Sessions, if the Prisoners appear; and if they do not, it will be no great Credit to their Cause, and your Majesty will know what you have to do. And this Paper in the mean time may make the matter notorious enough.

Things are now in a fair way to subdue effectually this Invisible Army of Missioners, whom I have already demonstrated to be Cheats and Traitors, and with great Ease, and by such true Christian and Commendable Means, as they themselves cannot except against; and all, or most in your Majesty's own Power. Which, as it is a thing which may be the Glory of your Reign, if accomplish'd, so may prove so much the more dangerous if it should be neglected. And there is this farther Advantage to recommend it, that the use of such Christian and Commendable Means, will expose to all men of sense the Unchristian Proceedings of your Adversaries, and take from the Chief the most Honourable of all his Titles; and besides, will as clearly distinguish the Antichristian Whore from a true Christian Mother, as Solomon did the true Mother from a false Pretender. And certainly no true and sincere Christian, sensible of the great Injury done to the genuine Christianity by the Scandals of Popery, but must be mov'd with Indignation against such abominable Injury, and be concern'd for the Application of so easy and commendable a Remedy.

They are of all Parties the most Unsufferable, being Agents for notorious Enemies; the most Inexcusable, being Obstinate, not only in an Indefensible Cause, but even in indefensible Principles; and the most Wicked and

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Seandalous, by perverting the People, not only into a Foreign Faction, but into Wicked Practices for the Service of it, by Dissembling, Equivocating, Lying and Swearing to gross Lies: whereof to Mr. Kettleby's Account I shall add another, a later, under the Conduct of one of great Name amongst them; and the most Easy to be suppress'd: So that it cannot but be both the Sin and Shame both of Church and State, if they be not, and the Glory of this Reign if they be. And this Glory and Happiness, as I heartily wish to your Majesty, so shall I be most industrious, to the best of my Power, to promote it.

Oct. 18. 1704.

Your Majesty's

most faithful Subject.

Edward Stephens.



A fair Proposal to the Nobility, Gentry and Laity of the Roman Catholick Communion of this Nation, concerning the Tryal of Dr. Gifford and two other Priests.

I Do hereby promise and engage, That if the said Dr. Gifford and the other Priests now indicted for Treason [or however] can between this and the next Sessions, give me a full and satisfactory Answer to the printed Paper herewith offer'd to them, intitul'd, A Charge of Treason against the Roman Catholick Missioners, &c. I will provide good and effectual Evidence for them against the Indictment against them, and embrace their Religion: Provided that if they cannot, they the said Nobility, Gentry, &c. or any deputed by them, will renounce the Profession of Pius IV. and grant that I am more truly Catholick than themselves; and the Court will be pleas'd to put off the Tryal till the next Sessions, and order the Prisoners to be kept in safe Custody in the mean time, and that I may have access to them to confer with them, as occasion may require.

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